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## Social Media and Fans:

Fans Motivation of Sports Club with Different Type of  
Ownership and League Position

소셜 미디어와 팬: 클럽 소유 유형 및 리그  
위치에 따른 스포츠 클럽 팬의 동기

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체육교육과

Kamarul Ikram bin Abdul Halim

## **Abstract**

# **Social Media and Fans:**

## **Fans Motivation of Sports Club with Different Type of Ownership and League Position**

Kamarul Ikram bin Abdul Halim

Global Sport Management, Department of Physical Education

The Graduate School

Seoul National University

This study examines how sport fans are using social media to interact with sports organizations. Professional sports club are important entity with large communities of followers which gives an ideal context to better understand the potential that social media have to help build strong bonds with fans. The research questions were produced by recognizing a gap in sports communication literature, which reveal a lack of framework to assess fans communication with professional sports club on social media. Based on existing key motives from previous literature, content analysis and netnographic methodology was carried out on official Facebook pages of three Malaysian Super League (MSL) clubs which are different in

ownership type and league position. Online comments by fans of three football clubs were explored in ten days period during MSL season. Inductive category development approach was used to extract new emerging motives of the fans. Results showed that fans from different club ownership type and league position have different key motives to interact with sports club. The results were discussed in light of the research questions and concluded with recommendation to conduct further research in the area of fans communicating on social media.

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**Keywords:** Fans motivation, interaction, social media

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Sports Fan and Social Media**

Social media has developed into a powerful marketing tool for organizations to reach customers. Organizations can use social media channels to reach current and potential customers quickly, while delivering unique content and encouraging interaction (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). In recent years, the use of this medium has become especially popular in the sports entertainment industry (Madden & Zickuhr, 2011).

Facebook allows users to get connected with friends and family by posting comments, sharing activities and photos, building a group and sharing the same interest. Facebook was found in 2004 when Mark Zuckerberg was a student at Harvard. The purpose was non other than a platform for students to socialize. However, Facebook's growth has been tremendous and achieves worldwide popularity. Sports organizations are one of the entities which benefited from the social media and Facebook. It can further optimize the Facebook's function and popularity to benefit the organization.

In order to provide consumers with up to date information, many social media are utilized by sport organizations to connect with the fans. These networks include outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and many more.

In the sports world, communication technology through social media and mobile apps has provided fans unprecedented access to sport organizations regardless of geographic location (Kerr & Gladden, 2008). Sport organizations benefit from marketing better image and communicate with people around the world. It also provides sport organizations a channel of communication to post news about their programs and create better brand awareness (Wallace et al., 2011).

According to Wallace et al. (2011), social media provides a strategic means for sport organizations to build and maintain a strong brand presence when building up relationships with Facebook users. With many functions that social media provider like Facebook offers; for example, share, like, follow and comment, Facebook users, particularly sports fan have the opportunity to use various function to involve themselves in the sport organizations social media.

## **1.2. Research Significance**

The purpose of this study is to examine fans motivation for interacting on social media. Social media have tremendously changed the way sport organizations engage with their fans. Therefore, sports manager are to fully optimize the tools and resources that social media can provide by investigating the fans motivation and communication.

Relationship marketing through social media is one of the key roles for the sports organization to enhance their effectiveness in communication. Thus, this study seeks to explore and present empirical evidence of how sports fan are interacting with sports organization through social media. To achieve the goal of this study, an official Facebook pages of three Malaysian Super League (MSL) clubs which are different in ownership type and league position will be analyzed to see how communication relates to relationship cultivation and relationship building. This study primarily limits its parameters to the relationship marketing as there are numerous theoretical perspectives, especially from the perspective of public relations.

## **1.3. Research Questions**

The research will investigate the difference of fans motivation to interact on social media. Specifically, it addressed the following questions:

RQ1. What are the differences of fans motivation to communicate on Facebook sites of privately owned club, association club and company owned club?

RQ2. What are the differences of fans motivation to communicate on Facebook sites of clubs on top and on the bottom of the league table?

## **Chapter 2 Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Fans Motivation**

Motivation refers to an activated state within a person that drives, urges, wishes, or desires the individual toward goal-directed behaviours (Bayton, 1958; Mowen & Minor, 1998). It is crucial for sport marketers to understand the reasons that cause and channel people to consume their products (i.e., goal-directed behaviours). With an effort to systematically understand the reasons that motivate people to watch or participate in sports, Sloan (1989) classified sport motivation theories into five categories: (a) salubrious effects, (b) stress and stimulation seeking, (c) catharsis and aggression, (d) entertainment, and (e) achievement seeking.

Wann (1995) found eight factors believed to be responsible for motivations leading to sport fandom: eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic, aesthetic, group affiliation and family needs; the

framework of Sport Fan Motivation Scale. Eustress stimulates an individual and is a positive stressor. It is motivating to individuals who enjoy the excitement and anxiety that is present while attending a sporting event (Gantz & Wenner, 1995). Fans are motivated by self-esteem which related to fan's favourite team performance, whether they are successful.

Motivation of escape is found in individual who seeks for satisfaction due to boringness in their life. Escape allows sports fans to enjoy sports and being away from their daily problematic routines. The reason individuals are selecting sports to enjoy themselves are because they find it more enjoyable compared to other kind of entertainment. These individuals attend sports games for their entertainment value (Gantz & Wenner, 1995).

Gantz and Wenner (1995) found that fans are motivated by economical concerns and the aesthetics at sporting events. Economical concerns fans are seeking for opportunity to win by gambling on match with other same interest people. Economical concern has an effect on individual's spending and financial ability.

Raney (2006) outlined three main categories of sport fan motivations: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral-social. For the first category which is motivations, Raney identified two subareas; learning and aesthetic. For emotional, there are four subareas; entertainment, eustress,

self-esteem, and escape.. Thirdly, there are behavioral and social subareas, which include release, companionship, group affiliation, family, and economics. All the subareas which consist 11 aspects describe fans motivations in supporting and immerse themselves into sports experience.

A sense of group affiliation is a feeling of an individual to be part of a group. It also relates to a need to join others and be part of them. Sports has allowed fans to voluntarily develop a relationship in a tribal manner. In fact, many sports organizations want the fans to have sense of affiliation to their club, association or brand. The desire to be part of the group includes attending match, purchasing club's merchandise and follow social media site of the sports organization. Funk and James (2001) introduced the Psychological Continuum Model in process to draw a relationship between a person and a sports team. There are four levels in the model which are awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance. The model has demonstrate the relationship between a fan and sport team , which are complex and change can depends on different component of sport atmosphere.

According to Vallerand and Losier (1999), there are different type of motivations which begins socially and psychologically. Fans begin to have extrinsic motivation by attending match. The motivation develops into

deeper interest and fans are seeking enjoyment in the match that they attend. Loyal fans attend a match because they have intrinsically motivated to seek the enjoyment of the match and feel satisfied by watching games.

According to Laverie and Arnett (2000), another component to consider in explaining the creation of an enduring sports fan is social identity. When a fan established a bond with the team, fans want the others recognize them as the fans for his or her favourite team. Fans always want themselves to be seen what they want to act in specific manner. Fans are likely to bring team's identity and image into themselves and make people recognize it. Many fans has motivated by esteem, group affiliation and entertainment. These elements are important in shaping one's fandom with sports. The motivations also encourage fans to choose sports as their entertainment due benefits they obtained from enjoying the fanship. When a fans develop a strong bond with the team on personal level, the satisfaction from supporting a team will make them find that sports are an enjoyable and fun leisure activities.

Owing to the growing body of literature on sport consumers, many comparative analysis have suggested that fan motives would differ. Situational factors contributing to motivational differences include types of sport (Robinson & Trail, 2005; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008),

country of origin (Won & Kitamura, 2007), point of attachment (Koo & Hardin, 2008), and cultural uniqueness (Kwon & Trail, 2001). In marketing research, cultural norms have been found to impact consumers' decision making (Briley & Aaker, 2006), loyalty to domestic retailers (Straughan & Albers-Miller, 2001), and perceived benefits of a loyalty program (Steyn, Pitt, Strasheim, Boshoff, & Abratt, 2010).

## **2.2 Sports and Fanship**

Freud (1949) and Kagan (1958) argued that identification is a process by which people include identity and characteristics of the group as part of their own self. In this condition, group identification occur, in which one's may be reactive to events happening to the group, just like it happened to him. One of the definitions of sports fanship is the fan identifies themselves strongly with their favorite team and responds to the performance of the team as if team success were a personal success and team failure a personal failure (Hirt, Zillmann, Kennedy, & Erickson, 1992). The concept of identification is relevant to the definition of fanship spelled by Wann and Branscombe (1993), which describe fanship as fans feeling of psychological bond to a team and regarded team's performance as their performance.



Researchers have shown that people around an individual, such as family, friends, and neighbours play a significant role in the development of fanship (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). In addition, identifications form for reasons of geography (e.g., the regional team), influenced by people around a person (e.g., family members and friends), and school (e.g., school or college). There are also other factors to admire specific players or club like the Manchester United or Real Madrid, just because of the popularity of a player, like Wayne Rooney or Cristiano Ronaldo), a club's performance and tactical (e.g., people became fans of the FC Barcelona because of the beautiful short-pass ball), or because of high exposure or high popularity of a certain sports (e.g. fans of English Premier League are very high due to greater broadcastings, sponsorship and popularity).

Another key factor for sports fanship are related to one's self-esteem and how it can benefit the individual. People have a profound need to feel that they have value (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice 1993; Maslow 1968), and considerable evidence illustrates the importance of self-esteem in how effectively people manage their everyday lives (Leary & Baumeister 2000; Taylor & Brown 1988). Self-esteem plays important role in relationship management. People with high self-esteem usually will try

harder and are more successful than their low self-esteem counterparts (McFarlin & Blascovich 1981). Research has been carried out to showing the myriad of ways people try to maintain self-esteem in the face of different challenges and threats (Crocker & Park 2004).

Stewart, Smith, and Nicholson's (2003) study has found that sports fans take fanship beyond watching match and returning to daily routines once the match is over. Many researchers have also found in their study that sports fans have their roles which are beyond a normal interest into sports. Sports fans develop high psychological and emotional affiliation to a club or clubs (Funk & James, 2001; Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001).

Throughout the years, many researchers have introduced concepts to explain fanship. Pooley (1978) discovered that fans let their fandom get into other areas of their life due to their passion for sport. Anderson (1979) on the other hand found that since the word fan is derived from fanatic, fans should be described as individuals with a frequent and excessive enthusiasm for sport. Spinrad (1981) labeled fans as individuals who think about and discuss sports even when they are not reading about, listening, or watching a sporting event. Additionally, Hirt et al. (1992) defined fans as individuals whose affiliation with a team involves a great deal of emotional significance

and value.

McPherson (1975) discovered that sport fans spend their time and money to consume sports. Sport fans also are knowledgeable about team (e.g. players, coach, game style), experience some level of emotional attachment with a team, experience various moods and feelings during a game, discuss team related stories with friend or same-minded people and also get more events and activities along with sporting events. The definitions proposed by Anderson (1979), Hirt et al. (1978), McPherson (1975), and Zillman et. al. (1992) show that sport fandom explained behavior of fans in an observable consumption behavior.

Additionally, one of the defining elements of sports fanship is the fans identify themselves with their favourite team and respond to the performance of the team as if the team success were a personal success and team failure a personal failure (Hirt, Zillmann, Kennedy, & Erickson, 1992).

On the other hand, Giulianotti (2002) suggests the existence of four types of spectators; supporters, followers, fans and flaneurs. Using literature in the hypercommodification of football and body culture, Giulianotti (2002) categorizes spectators using “two basic binary opposition: hot-cool and traditional-consumer”. The “hot-cool” continuum aims to establish the extent to which an individual’s identity is determined and influenced by

their attraction towards a team.

As a spectator, fans have been spending their resource to cheer their team, in terms of financial, time and effort. Richelieu (2012) argued that a “professional sports team has the potential to build its brand equity by capitalising on the emotional relationship it shares with its fans” (p. 36). Once a team’s fans identify and unite within brand communities (at venues such as social media), the team will likely enjoy sustained, long-term brand growth that extends beyond their immediate physical community and market to a broader global market.

### **2.3 Club Ownership Type**

Hamil and Chadwick (2010) in a study on English Premier League (EPL) clubs show that since the formation of the EPL in 1992, three ownership models have presented themselves, all having different motivations and measures of success: the stock market model of ownership; the supporter trust model of ownership; and, the foreign ownership model (which has become increasingly prominent since 2004). The study suggests that all three models of the type of ownership can impact on football club governance.

In Malaysia for example, every team in the Malaysia Super League must have a license to play in the league. To obtain a license, teams must be financially healthy and meet certain standards of conduct as organizations. As part of privation effort for the league, all clubs compete in Malaysian Super League (MSL) and Malaysian Premier League (MPL) is required to obtain Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) Club Licensing. There are three ownership types existed; privately owned club, association club and company owned club.

According to Wilson, Plumley and Ramchandani (2013),

..the increasing commercialization of football has generated growth in external political interest, in particular from national competition authorities and the private institutions. In turn, this has provided certain stakeholders with new avenues through which they can extend and protect their own interests.

The issue of different type of club ownership are a new phenomenon in football industry; the fact that many clubs have sought such investment to ease their financial problems; and the media attention it

attracts, it is worthwhile to consider the impact of ownership type on fans motivation.

## **2.4 Relationship Marketing**

Shani and Sujana (1992) define relationship marketing as:

...integrated effort to identify, maintain, build up a network with individual customers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time (p. 44).

Gronroos (1996) considers relationship marketing fundamentally distinct and states that ‘exchange is a concept with a short-term notion where something is given to someone else, whereas relationship has a long-term notion implying an association of two parties’ (p. 8). Gronroos (1994) had earlier articulated his view on the long-term focus relationship, indicating that the aim of relationship marketing is to ‘create results in the long run through enduring and profitable relationship with customers’ (p. 10).

The relationship marketing approach is considered as one of the most important areas in the marketing field (William & Chinn, 2010). In relationship marketing, “the objectives of all parties involved are met, where this is done by a mutual giving and fulfillment of promises” (Gronroos, 1997, p. 407). Relationship marketing is nowadays relevant to sports business. As sports industry is growing rapidly, more business owners are created. Thus, sports manager are to utilize the potential of relationship marketing.

The main goal of the relationship-based exchange is to create long-term relationships with the finest consumers, increase insight on their behavior, and generate additional value (Stavros, Pope, & Winzar, 2008). Long term relationship with customers is a key motive that an organization as well has to cultivate to further develop mutual trust. Bee and Kahle (2006) explained that relationship marketing considers consumers as lifetime customers and makes a thorough effort to understand their needs, wants, and values.

In terms of relationship marketing, developing an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand is an integral part of the relationship building process (Berry, 2000). With the advancement of new technologies and various platforms, interaction with consumers is being

made easier and more efficient (Yadav & Varadarajan, 2005). The increasing number of new generations has increased the number of consumers accessing to organization and expose to organization (Tapscott, 2009). More new generations, particularly among the young ones are now seeking an opportunity to involved in any way with sport organization, not only as a fan but also to engage in activities. As a consequence, an emphasis on motives, dialog and creativity is required to attract consumers to co-create value (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) and to provide organizations with the basic material for relationship relation, expansion and maintenance (Baron, Conway, & Warnaby, 2010).

Marketing field by Berry (1983) after its introduction has resulted in the relationship marketing approach becomes an important of modern marketing strategy. Relationship marketing's primary objectives are to bind long term relationships with customers in a process to generate new business opportunity and increase profit (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Relationship marketing has been utilized by marketing professionals in the sports industry in a variety of settings (Williams & Chinn, 2010).

Girginov et al. (2009) researched how the usage of websites affected the relationship marketing of Canadian national sport organizations. The study found that these organizations were not yet optimizing the full



power of web-based, or computer mediated communication. In another study carried out earlier on the communication preferences of baseball fans, Greenwell and Andrew (2006) advised that sports organizations make efforts to include viral marketing, social networking, and blogging in their marketing plans. Relationship-marketing strategies have given an opportunity for sport organizations to connect with the fans on an interpersonal level. Through connecting with the fans on an interpersonal level, sports organization becomes more knowledgeable about the needs of the fans and is better able to meet their needs. Sports organization has also utilize relationship marketing strategies to enhance their brand awareness among the sports fans.

## **2.5 Social Media**

Kaplan and Haenlein's (2009, p. 61) define social media as a "group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow for the creation and exchange of user generated content." In their study, they regarded Web 2.0 as web applications that enable interactive information sharing platform, user-centered design and also collaboration.

Social media has been growing very rapidly over the years. Through social media growth and expansion, there are many social media platform

existed, in which cover multiple type of purpose to target specific segment of users. Social media are regarded as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connection and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Social media have been a phenomenal with rapidly growing numbers of users worldwide. The definition by these researchers explained how individual can have their own space in the website and share it in their circle of friends and family.

Social media began to popular when companies and entrepreneurs developing the sites based on users demands. For instance, Instagram and Flickr have focused on photo-sharing, Couchsurfing connects travelers and tourists to individuals offering accommodation around the world for free while LinkedIn has more business oriented interface.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube have their own uniqueness whereby people join them for different purpose ranging from personal, entertainment to business purpose. With the growing usage of personal device such as smart phones and tablets, the accessibility to access social media are increasing. More than a billion individuals around the world are connected and networked together to create, collaborate and

contribute their knowledge and wisdom (Cheung et al, 2011). Among them all, Facebook has the highest users. As of December 31, 2015, there are 1.59 billion monthly active users in Facebook (Facebook, 2015).

Facebook and other social media offer a good opportunity for the people to to socialize through sharing. Sharing in this regards involve multiple platform such as photo, video, and blogging. These sites also enable users to interact through call, video call, chatting function, instant and sending e-mail. It allows users to create personal profiles including demographic features, information about their background and also photo albums and videos (Lewis et al., 2008). Multiple functions of social media attract people particularly young adults to engage in the sites and get connected with people in many different ways.

In these user generated content websites, particularly social media, the function and development has been undeniably overwhelming, especially among adolescents and young adults; more than 55% of adolescents online use social networks, and 48% of them visit social media daily or more (Lenhart and Madden 2007). Young adults are the group which is popularly related to engage with social media. For young adults, where a sense of belonging and demonstration of knowledge are considered important, the social media also allow them to express their identity, build their social

network and convey their views to their peers (O'Reilly, Berger, Hernandez, Parent, & Seguin, 2012).

Through modernization of technology, social media has been upgrading its function in getting the users to contribute in the web content. In 21st century, consumers are escaping from traditional advertising sources and medium like television, radio or newspapers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media users utilize the social media websites as much as possible to get latest information such as news and stories. They also use social media as a primary platform to connect with family and friends. For example, Facebook Instant Messenger is another feature which enables the users to chat with friends, sharing information, music, videos and news.

According to Boyd (2010), there are four elements that shape social media communication which are persistence, searchability, replicability and scalability. Communication on a social media will always remain on it even a person change its account and leave the social media. The second element according to Boyd (2010) is searchability. The visibility of communication on social media is always searchable even with the high volume of communication and data in social media. With advances in search engine, interaction on social media is becoming more efficient. The third element according to Boyd (2010) is replicability which refers to the ability to share

and disperse communication in social media. Status, statements, photos or videos can be shared onto other friend's profile and they can be. The function of sharing in communication allows greater and further reach ability. The fourth element according to Boyd (2010) is scalability which refers to the extent that social media communication can reach large volumes of people across vast geographic boundaries and social networks (Boyd, 2010).

With this rapid growth of social media over a decade, research focusing on social media has also growing. Provided that social media became one of the important media platforms among the most of young adults, and sport organizations interest in social media has also been growing, the study attempts to identify motivation of fans to interact on social media of their favourite sports team.

## **2.6 Social Media Consumption Motivation**

Staying in touch with current friends, connecting with old friends, making new friends, gathering information, and finding potential dating partners were the main motivations for individuals to consume social media (Smith, 2011). A lot of people owned multiple electronic devices, particularly smart phones which has increased its capacity to be used for social media.

Generally using the uses framework, researchers has been conducted extensive research regarding the motivational constructs of social media consumption and have extensively identified them as information sharing (e.g., Johnson & Yang, 2010; Shao, 2009), friendship/socializing (e.g., Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, 2010), connection (e.g., Chen, 2011), entertainment (e.g., Haridakis & Hanson, 2009), social support (e.g., Sanderson, 2010), interaction (e.g., Clavio & Kian, 2010) and sense of community (e.g., Anderson, 2011).

From these previous studies, researchers found various frameworks on motivations. Expansion of the literature is looking at identifying the motivations to communicate in social media in the sports communication context. The integrated concept of social media usage provided insights about individuals' overall social media motivations. Due to the continuous emergence of social media platforms, there is a need to understand broad social media consumption motivations (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). Deeper explorations of the motive of social media consumption are an asset for organizations to re-evaluate its communication strategy and marketing to reach greater followers.

## **2.7 Facebook Usage**

Facebook is the most popular social media sites in the world with more than 700 million active users. The interesting part of Facebook is users can post up their current feeling or opinion on certain issues and initiate the interaction between friends in obtaining updates on each other. Moreover, users can also select the options of every post to add photos or videos, besides setting the privacy of each post in order to avoid unwanted people from accessing too much of your information. Facebook notifications alert plays an important role to inform the user on latest reply or comment by other users.

Facebook main features are the wall. Every user has their own wall where they can write and share stories with videos and photos. The interesting side of Facebook is that not only the owner of the page can write on his wall but his or her affiliates can do the same. Facebook page has a lot of features and they are getting more by day, week or months. The wall page has allowed not only individual but organization to share their articles, activities, events and link to articles. Sports organizations are not excluded in involving themselves in the trend. Fans are then able to respond to team-posted messages or create their own message, allowing the team and its fans

to engage in conversations that could yield important fan feedback (Pattison, 2009).

Community building via Facebook has certainly been successful. For example, currently, Manchester United has 68,369,066 fans on Facebook and this number continues to grow. It demonstrates that individuals put more effort to follow the team and add knowledge on their favourite clubs. Fans are also develop their sense of affiliation to the club by accepting behavioral cues (e.g. buy merchandise, buy tickets, watch the game on video streaming). In reaction to this, Facebook has many fan pages, both created by the club and the fans. Fans can enjoy more coverage on their favourite club including team news, videos, photos and stories.

Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) study why individuals wanted to join Facebook. The sample of 289 students taken from one American university showed that the perceived playfulness and the critical mass of the site were the main drivers of intentions to join, besides normative pressure, trust, usefulness, and ease of use. From gender perspective, Hargittai (2007) on a heterogeneous sample of 1060 first-year undergraduate students in the US showed that women are more likely to use Facebook than men. These findings are important for marketing aspects in organization dealing with followers and customers. Facebook has evolved by not only a social media



that connect individuals, but it has created opportunities for many entities to create their own page and market their service and products. The social media has become an instrument to connect with many stakeholders.

## **2.8 Social Media and Sports**

Before social media are existed, traditional media such as television, newspaper and magazines have been the platform of sport communications. Whereas traditional media are still very popular in sport communications, social media are quickly gaining importance (Alonso & O'Shea, 2012). The nature of social media which is easily accessible, user friendly and widely used around the world has increased not only popularity of sports but also the importance of sports communications. Sports communication particularly among fans can be seen in social media pages of sports entity for example football clubs, athletes' page, sport governing body, sport organization and sports club owners.

Social media has become a very fast, effective and trustable channel for people to get any information about sports. On the other hand, sport organizations benefit from marketing better image and communicate with people around the world. It also provides sport organizations a channel of communication to post news about their programs and create better brand awareness (Wallace et al., 2011).

According to Wallace et al. (2011) social media provides a strategic means for sport organizations to build and maintain a strong brand presence when building up relationships with Facebook users. With many functions that social media provider like Facebook offers; for example, share, like, follow and comment, Facebook users have the opportunity to use various function to involve themselves in the sport organizations page.

Social media has been one of the most effective ways for sport organization and athletes to get connected with the fans. Research has started to explore how sports organizations (Waters et al., 2010; Wallace et al., 2011; Pronschinske et al., 2012), athletes (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010; Hambrick et al., 2010; Pegoraro, 2010; Hambrick & Mahoney, 2011; Sanderson, 2011), and fans (Clavio & Kian, 2010) use social media. For sport practitioner, research findings from scholars are a very useful source to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of social media and sports.

Today sport organizations are realizing the benefits of social media and are seeking ways to most effectively use them as a part of their overall marketing and communication strategies (Coyle, 2010). Sport organizations are also invested in zero or low cost marketing with the existing of social media which can reach millions or even billions of people around the world.

According to Coyle (2010), sport clubs must actively use social media to enhance brand management, encourage social interactions among fans, promote ticket sales and present a better online experience. Sports clubs have been very active in utilizing social media to increase number of fans, ticket and merchandise sales and sharing useful information for the fans. Fans are likely to favor sports club which actively update their news, sharing the latest videos, post more photos and always responsive to the fans.

## **2.9 Social Media and Sports Fans**

Before the existence of social media, the relationship between professional sports club and fans was limited. In Web 1.0, Pegoraro claimed that “the sports fans could visit a team, league or athlete website and peruse the content posted on the site” (Pegoraro, 2010, p. 502).

Social media growth in web 2.0 has given more opportunity for sports fans to interact not only with sports organization but also among fans. Social media after web 2.0 also allow interaction between the fans and professional athletes. The trend has changed when two way communication are made possible and more convenient. Athletes have their own social media platform and fan page. Athletes communicate and express their feelings, share their activities and get their fans closer to them. At the same time, there are fans that created a platform to gather another fans to support the

sports organization or athletes through social media. This phenomenon has increase social media consumption and making traditional media became less attracted, especially to the young adults. Sports teams make money from social media when they listen to fan comments, build lifelong fan relationships, and respond to emerging opportunities for sales events (Butler, 2013). Sports organization has leverage social media as one of their tools to receive feedback from the customers. As a function of this awareness, public relations professionals and other strategic communications professionals now manage teams' social media accounts (McCray, 2009; Moore, 2011).

The information about sports are now become usual to be seen in social media. In fact, many fans look for latest information about their favourite club through it's official social media page like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Clavio and Zimmerman (2012) stated that it is extremely important for online media such as social media to integrate into the lives of sports fans because of the knowledge that is available to them online.

Hur, Ko, and Valacich (2007) found that the convenience and benefits of social media interaction have increased fans' motivation to connect with their favorite teams. However, in spite of the advantages of the social media, only limited studies have examined the social media usage in a

sporting environment especially focusing on the sports fans (Mahan, 2011; Wang, 2013).

Waters et al. (2011) discovered that NFL teams put more focus on building relationship with the fans on the official club's websites than their Facebook page. The research found that NFL teams identified the potential of the website to build relationship with fans as they engage them with a combination of information provision and interaction.

In addition, in the study that Broughton (2010) reported, the results showed that fans reported becoming greater fans of the MLB and the NFL because of their use of social media. This study investigates how fans of specific leagues identify their affiliation to specific team or league through social media (Broughton, 2010). Other

The more identified a sports fan is, then the more likely they are to find ways to publicly demonstrate their fandom (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). This characteristic of fans has made it more convenient to the sports organization to strengthen their brand presence. This study accumulates previous literature on social media and sports fans to fill the small gap, which focuses on motivation of fans from different background of sports club.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **3.1. Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to explore the fans motivation to interact on social media. Sport organizations can leverage social media to enhance relationship marketing with fans. Gaining a better understanding of fans motivation from different teams and perspectives will provide sport organizations with valuable insights into the types of marketing and communication strategy they could employ in order to maximize important outcomes.

There are two major research questions developed:

RQ1. What are the differences of fans motivation to communicate on Facebook sites of privately owned club, association club and company owned club?

RQ2. What are the differences of fans motivation to communicate on Facebook sites of clubs on top and on the bottom of the league table?

A preliminary stage of this study involved visiting Malaysian Super League (MSL) official website ([www.footballmalaysia.com](http://www.footballmalaysia.com)) and following the links to each of the 12 teams to determine which category they were fall to, based on the research questions. Three teams which fulfilled the criteria were selected in this study. Johor Darul Takzim (JDT) is the privately owned

club, Terengganu FA is the association club and Felda United is the company owned club. At the same time, JDT was the club on top of the MSL league and Terengganu FA was the club on the bottom of the same league.

### **3.2 Research Method**

Qualitative research is a rigorous approach to finding the answers to questions. It involves spending an extensive amount of time in the field, working in the often complex, time consuming process of data analysis, writing long passages, and participating in a form of social and human science research that does not have firm guidelines or specific procedures.

A qualitative approach utilizing netnography, content analysis and inductive category development approach will be adopted to explore the motivation of fans for interacting on social media.

Using the most popular social media site, Facebook, samples were taken from Malaysia Super League (MSL) fans of three clubs, which represent top and bottom team of the league, privately owned club, association club and company owned club. The exploration took place during peak-season, a period which both fans and teams have many interactions. It was an opportunity to see various motivations as fans who were actively engage on the sites during the season.

### **3.2.1. Netnography**

Netnography is used as one of the approaches to collect data for this study. Kozinets (1998) define netnography as:

a written account resulting from fieldwork studying the cultures and communities that emerge from online, computer mediated, or internet-based communications, where both the field work and the textual account are methodologically informed by the traditions and techniques of cultural anthropology. (p. 6).

Netnography is an adaptation of the traditional ethnographic research method to the examination of communities online and provides insight into natural human behavior (Kozinets, 2010). Observation, rather than participation, was used in netnography which is unobtrusive and enables naturalistic data to be gathered at low cost (Jayanti, 2010; Krippendorff, 2004). Consistent with previous research related to social media in other industries (Granheim & Lundman, 2004; Harwood & Garry, 2003; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), the unit of analysis was the content of the Facebook sites and the coding units were the individual posts and comments by fans.



Kozinets (2010) recommends examining online groups that attract many individuals who actively post, provide information that can be analyzed, and show interactions that relate to the outlined research questions. In this study, it is proposed that Facebook, given its broad popularity and its interactive public writing space (“wall” feature), which allowed teams to post information on their organization’s official page for fans to subsequently read, respond and interact with, would be the most appropriate source for data relating to fans.

C. Stavros et al., (2014) have categorized netnography content of fans motivation to interact on social media into four categories which are passion, hope, esteem and camaraderie. The same framework is applied to this study to determine the fans motivations for each club.

### **3.2.2 Content Analysis**

Content analysis allows observed information to be measured in a specific, iterative way. Berelson originally defined content analysis in 1952 as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (as cited in Stempel & Westley, 1989, p. 125). This definition produced a significant point of difference to other research techniques at the time, but the concept has since developed much more than this description. Stone, Dunphy, Smith and

Ogilvie (1966) go further than observing data as purely quantitative or descriptive, defining content analysis as “any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text” (p. 5). This description allows contextual elements to be perceived when analysing data, giving scope for objectively analysing source intent and overall themes. Krippendorff (2004) further endorses content analysis as a method by validating its ability to be qualitative in nature and latently interpreted. He also emphasises that text is read for multiple purposes by different readers and meaning cannot be extracted from text alone. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful manner) to the contexts of their use” (p. 18). Content analysis will be used to elicit themes from the text (Hara et al., 2000). Computer software will be used to aid in sorting the large volume of data.

This study creates a clear definition for social media for the current time frame, as well as insights as to the future of social media. As technology continues to evolve, so will social media and the way in which researchers define the term. The majority of social media studies up until this point have used content analysis as a research method (e.g., Clavio, 2009; Hambrick et al., 2010; Waters et al., 2010). Content analysis is an

appropriate method for analyzing data in the beginning stages of social media research.

The study analyzed three Malaysian Super League (MSL) teams official Facebook fan pages. During the qualitative content analysis, all fans comments were captured using software called NCapture which convert the data into .nvcx files. These files were exported into content analysis software called NVivo 11. Comments relative to RQ1 and RQ2 were coded according to the existing fans motivation categories by Stavros et. al (2014).

During ten days observation using netnography from September 22, 2016 to October 2, 2016, all clubs has similarities in terms of posts; only page administrators write all post in their wall page. Therefore, comments from fans can be collected in all postings made by page administrators. Non-probability, judgment sample (Marshall, 1996; Zikmund, Ward, Lowe, & Winzar, 2007) of fan comments was collected during the ten days period, coinciding with the peak of MSL league activity.

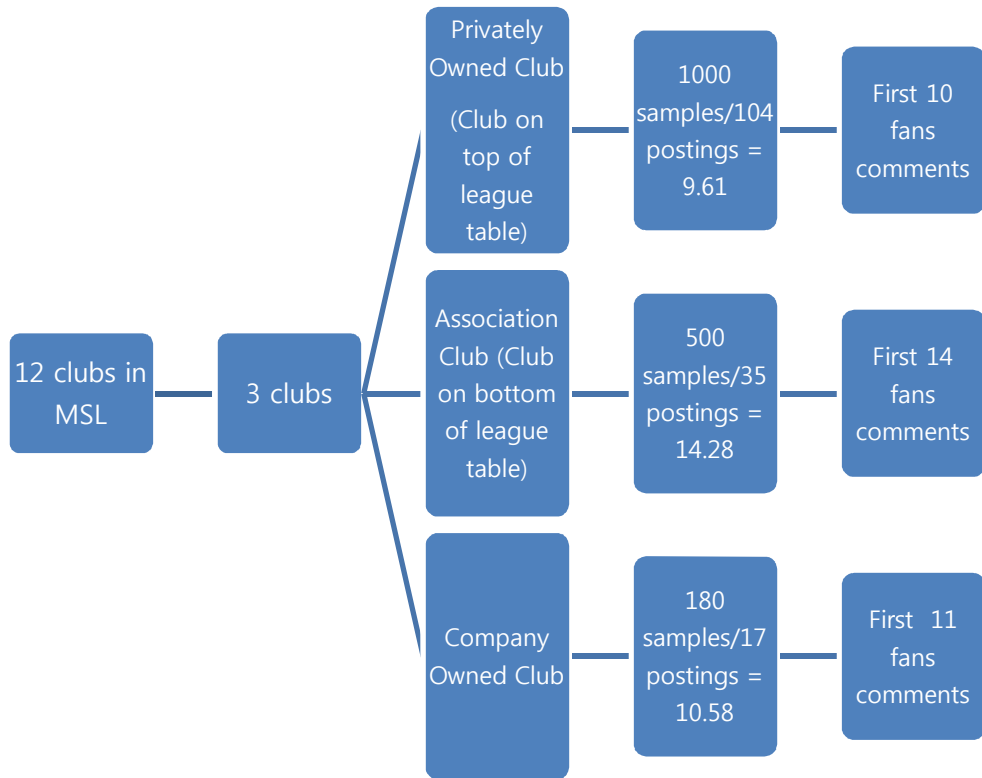


Figure 1. Sampling frame of fans comments

Sample comments were selected for each club's Facebook page. The reason this study were not able to code all fans comments was due to excessive number of comments from the fans, which are more than 17,000 comments. However, using netnography approach, comments were read to observe the trend of fans communication which are discussed in the next chapter. To increase the reliability of the sample, only the first 10 to 14

comments from each posting from page administrators (as shown in Figure 1.) were coded into each sub-category using the framework by Stavros et. al (2014).

An important component in conducting content analysis in this study was to separate comments which contains jargon and too many abbreviations. There were also unrelated comments excluded such as advertisements. The fans comments were downloaded into pdf form and were read repeatedly to achieve better understandings before they were coded. Using NVivo 11, nodes were created based on framework by Stavros et. al (2014) and new nodes were created after inductive category development approach by Mayring (2000).

### **3.2.3. Inductive Category Development Approach**

According to previous study by Stavros et. al (2014), the study was undertaken during a two-week off-season period of a single North American sport using a selected range of teams. Given this timing, additional categories of motivation may emerge during the season. In this study, it was done during the season of MSL, which have attracted more comments from the fans. In this regards, new category or sub-category may emerge. Hence, inductive category development approaches was applied to process fans comments into new motives and code them into new categories.

According to Bernard (2011), inductive approach, also known in inductive reasoning, starts with the observations and theories are proposed towards the end of the research process as a result of observations. Inductive research “involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses”. No theories or hypotheses would apply in inductive studies at the beginning of the research and the researcher is free in terms of altering the direction for the study after the research process had commenced.

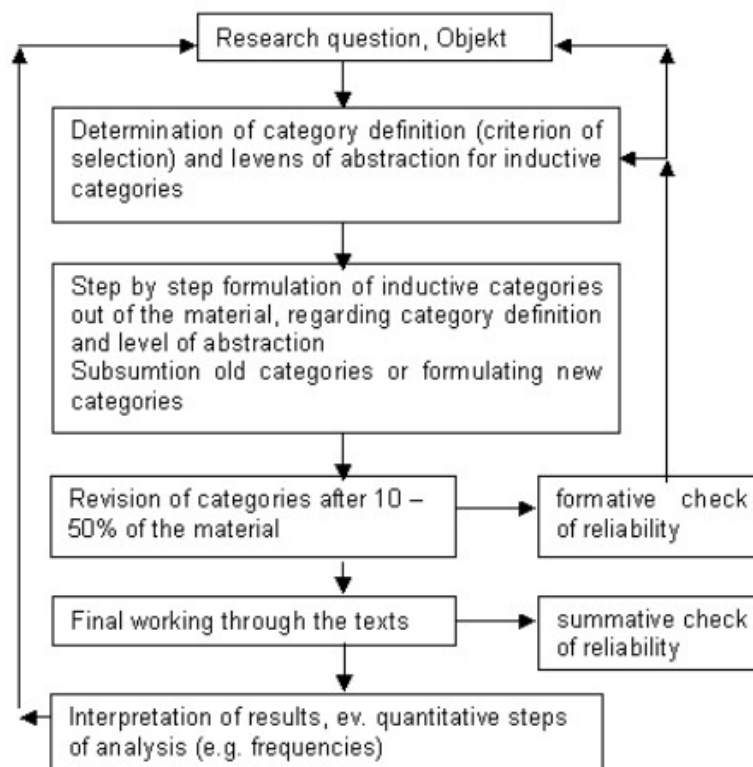


Figure 2. Step Model of Inductive Category Development (Mayring, 2000)

In conducting inductive category development approach in this study, new motives was read and recorded in pdf files. Determination of category definition was set for inductive categories. Step by step formulations of categories were taken by formulating new categories, revision, formative check or reliability and interpretation of results (Mayring 2000) as shown in Figure 1. Those categories were revised, eventually reduced to main categories and checked in respect to their reliability.

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012), it is important to stress that inductive approach does not imply disregarding theories when formulating research questions and objectives. This approach aims to generate meanings from the data set collected in order to identify patterns and relationships to build a theory; however, inductive approach does not prevent the researcher from using existing theory to formulate the research question to be explored.

## **Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1. Results**

In total, 17,472 Facebook comments made by individuals on the official Facebook ‘wall’ of the three clubs of interest (JDT, Terengganu FA and Felda United) were collected and analyzed. Table 1. shows the number of page administrator’s post and fans comments during data collection.

Some differences between clubs were recognized from the pattern of fans interaction. Clubs with large fan base tended to have more followers and not responded directly to fans comments. In this study, JDT is the club with the most followers and was seen only posting general information. JDT were actively post a lot of information in their page compared to other clubs. Thus, JDT Facebook page generated high number of comments. Compared to Terengganu FA, despite a large fan base club, there were not many followers were seen in its Facebook page and the number of postings by page administrator are significantly lower than JDT. On the other hand, Felda United with a small fan base has both low number of followers and postings by page administrator. These two clubs’s Facebook page; Terengganu FA and Felda United have not generated a lot of fans comments in each of their postings.



Table 1. Total number of page administrator's postings, fans comment and sample coded for all clubs

Team	Total Post by Page Administrator	Total Comments by Fans	Number of Sample
JDT	104	16,551	1000
Terengganu FC	35	741	500
Felda United	17	180	180
Total	156	17,472	1,680

## 4.2. Categories of Fans Motivations

All comments were coded and grouped using NVivo 11 software into main categories; passion, hope, esteem and camaraderie and their each sub-category as shown in Table 2. There are two new sub-category identified; state affiliation and criticism as shown in Table 3. State affiliation was categorized into passion and criticism was categorized into esteem. These two new emerging sub-categories were created to distinguish fans motivation of tribalism and venting accordingly.

Table 2. Stavros et. al. (2014) categories of fans motivation

Stavros et. al (2014) Categories of Motivations	
<i>Passion</i> - Love - Tribalism - Encouragement - Praise	<i>Esteem</i> - Venting - Expertise - Sharing
<i>Hope</i> - Ambition - Expectation - Anticipation	<i>Camaraderie</i> - Socialization - Belonging - Defense - Problem Solving

Table 3. New sub-categories from inductive category development approach

New Sub-category Identified from Samples	
<i>Passion</i> - State affiliation	<i>Esteem</i> - Criticism
<i>Hope</i> - None	<i>Camaraderie</i> - None

#### 4.2.1 Emerging of New Sub-categories

According to Stavros et. al (2014), the category of motivation in their study are the results of comments collected during off-season. Therefore, additional categories of motivation may emerge during the season. In this study, there are two new sub-categories emerged from inductive category development approach (Mayring, 2000). The existing of new categories relies on this study which took place during the season. More fans comment were posted before, during and after the match. Hence, more category of motivation existed. Table 4. shows the coding agenda for new-subcategory emerged in this study.

Table 4. Coding agenda for new sub-category

Category	Definition	Example	Coding rules
C1 States affiliation	Strong statements of love to the state and strong sense of affiliation to the state.	<p>We are the southerners!!! JDT and JDT II for Johoreans!</p> <p>Go Kuala Terengganu! Kuala Nerang! Kemaman!</p>	Overall impression from netnography data. Concrete statements for feeling affiliated to the state.
C2 Criticism	Statements which contain the expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes. Contain more constructive comments and no abusive words.	<p>I think we need major revamp with the team and management. There might be some internal issues. The management seem lost this season. I personally think it has something to do with money and mismanagement.</p> <p>The tacticals are the thing that the team should look upon. Why put Shukor as AMF while you have Faiz who are younger and faster? Less and less people in the club have deep knowledge on each player. Please do not change the club's technical and coach in short term or they will not be familiar enough with the players.</p>	Overall impression from netnography data. Concrete statements of criticism to the club.

State affiliation was coded from strong statements of love to the state and strong sense of affiliation to a specific state. This characteristic was seen in many of fans comment from JDT and Terengganu FA Facebook page. Football clubs in MSL are mostly a state representative. Therefore, there are strong sense of affiliation to the state among the fans, which showed more sense of belonging to the state than to the club itself. This characteristic is exhibit and shown in their comments particularly when another motivations are existed in the conversations, such as encouragement and defense. It should be noted that this sub-category is not similar to tribalism. According to Stavros et. al (2014), for tribalism, fans post are coupled with a broader sense of unity which gave a strong sense of tribal affiliation and distinction. Tribalism is closely connected to fans affiliation towards the club.

Additionally, criticism was created to distinguish the comments from another sub-category; venting. Venting in this study was used to categorize venting behavior with negative arguments and less constructive and informative comments. The study shows that many fans express their venting behavior and dissatisfaction using simple and short abusive words e.g. Referees are biased! WTF??!!!! Damn it!!!! and What a stupid game! stupid tacticals! No 31 & 3 play like shit! There was a high number of

venting motivated comments found in the official page of Terengganu FA, the club on the bottom of the league as shown in Figure 2.

Criticism on the other hand contains strong opinion and sought, and often received, validation by other fans. These posts typically are longer and rather elaborative. Definition of criticism in this study is statements which contain the expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes. It is found that criticisms from fans were related to disappointment with performance, frustration with players and management, as well as with the organizer. Given the on-season time period of the study, criticism often was directed to players.

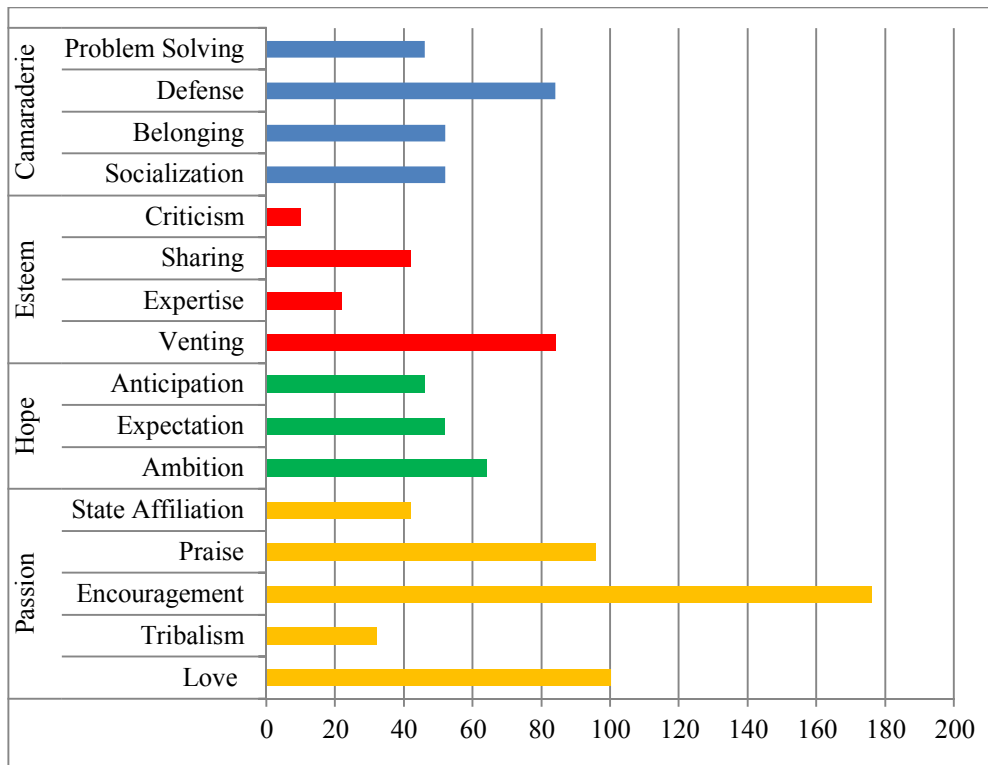


Figure 2. The hierarchy chart of fans motivation for JDT

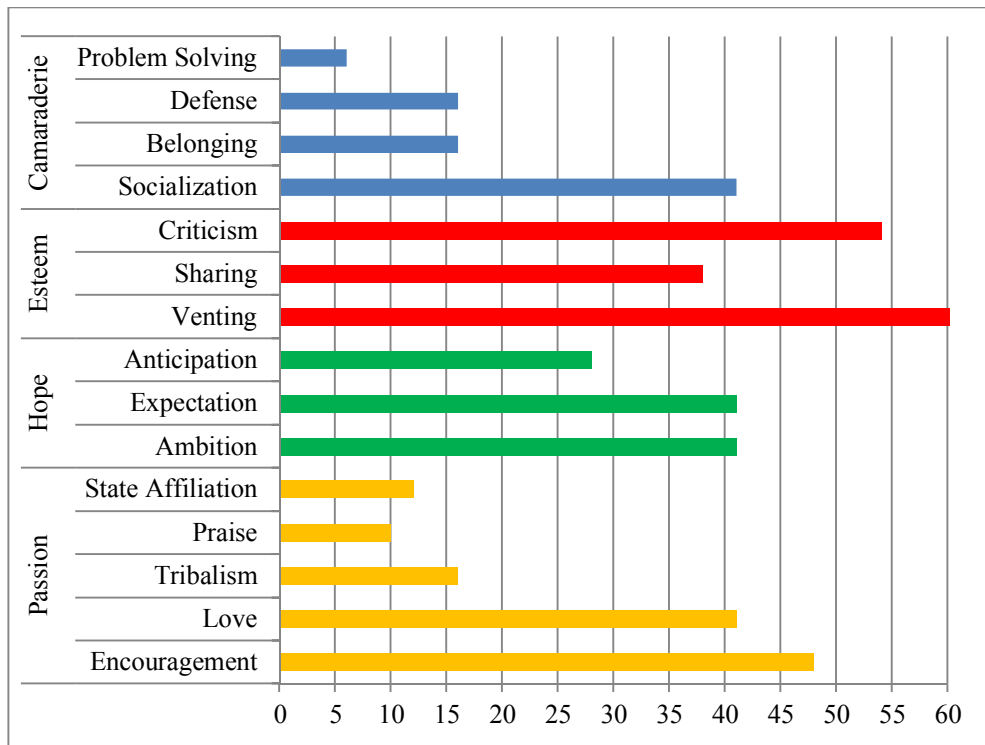


Figure 3. The hierarchy chart of fans motivation for Terengganu FA

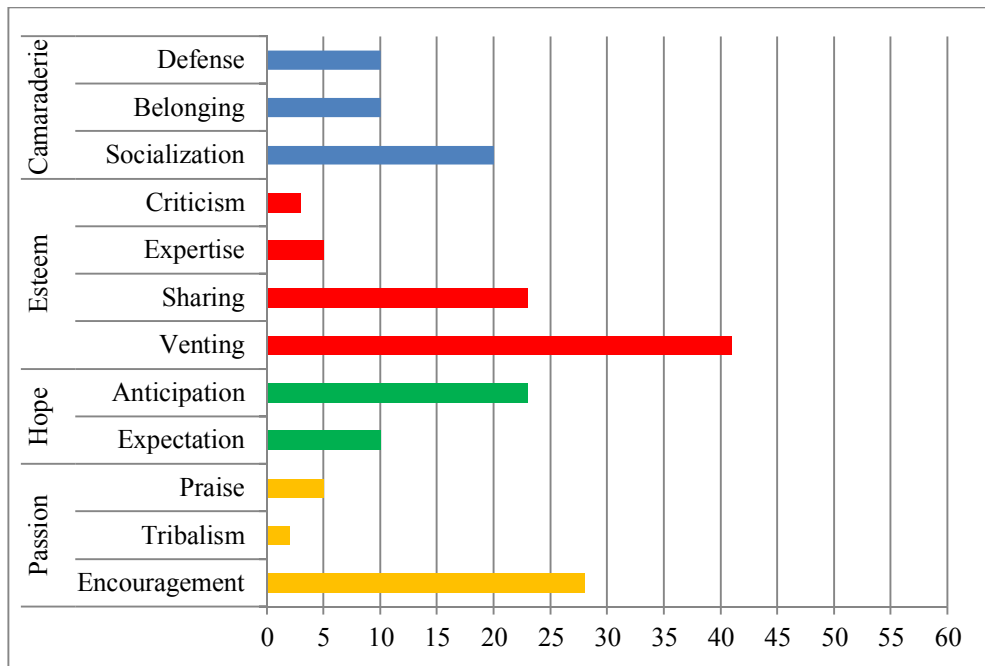


Figure 4. The hierarchy chart of fans motivation for Felda United

Figure 2., Figure 3., and Figure 4. shows different pattern of fans motivation for each club. In researching answer to RQ1 and RQ2, comments are read and coded under each sub-category. Table 5 to 8 showed the categories and example of fans motivations types.



Table 5. Categories and examples of passion motives

Category	
<p>Passion</p> <p>Definition: Team-directed displays of strong affection reflecting one or a combination of love, tribalism, encouragement and praise (Stavros et. al, 2014)</p>	
Sub-category	Examples
Love	<p>Win, lose or draw, JDT WILL ALWAYS BE IN MY HEART!!!</p> <p>I LOVE TUNKU MAHKOTA JOHOR!</p> <p>Praise be to ALLAH, #thankyoutmj #lovetmj #respecttmj #salutetmj, #allahblessjohor #lovemariogomez</p> <p>We will always support you no matter what...We know we are small but we have sacrificed a lot just to be in the stadium and cheer you guys up. ..Love T'ganu!!! XOXOXOXO</p> <p>Good Evening Johorean. Support from Egypt with love!</p> <p>Love Felda United! #fanfeldautd</p>
Tribalism	<p>Live the Johoreans, live JDT!!</p> <p>Wear the BLUE jersey guys!!! Don't wear BLACK (away jersey)..Let them know who JDT is, the best club in AFC Cup!</p> <p>This home is ONLY for us, the southern tigers. Do not make any provocation. Mind your own team!!!!!!</p>
Encouragement	<p>We are all the 12<sup>th</sup> player, one tone, one song, one vision and one Larkin Stadium will fight for our victory. Come everyone, let's make the stadium full (this is our last match in Larkin this year)!!</p> <p>Keep focus and avoid do silly mistakes..victory will be with us...</p> <p>Wish you guys success for tomorrow's match.</p> <p>All the best for Sang Penyu</p> <p>I hope this team will revive one day. Never give up. Not only to players but to the fans</p> <p>GOOD LUCK TERENGGANU FA. IT'S DO OR DIE. WE</p>

	STAND BEHIND YOU GUYS!!
Praise	<p>That was the best JDT!!!</p> <p>NICE, CONGRATS GUYS. YOUR EFFORT IS JUST AWESOME!</p> <p>Nice game last night..we managed to attack them over and over but can only afford a draw....we have another 90 minutes...God willing, we will be in the finals!!!</p> <p>I really admire the goalkeeper, he is the best..i would give him 5 stars...</p> <p>They played really well..issey..bikana..sharbinee were on form, compared to previous game where they played a bit off-performance. I have seen them quite frequent this season and they are super good!!</p>
State affiliation	<p>#LUASKANKUASAMU</p> <p>#ALLAHPELIHARAKANSULTAN</p> <p>JDT belong to the King #allahsavestheking #expandyour power</p> <p>We are the southerners!!! JDT and JDT II for Johoreans!</p> <p>THIS IS SOUTH CHINA VS SOUTH MALAYSIA, NOT MALAYSIA</p> <p>Bring them the southern flags!</p> <p>Only johorean blood can support Johorean teams...</p> <p>LIVE JOHOR FOR JOHOR...TO THE BOSS AND FANS, PLEASE MAKE THE STADIUM NOISE..</p> <p>THIS IS EAST COAST!</p> <p>Please behave..don't be too happy in their home stadium..remember who we are..we are not the northerners..</p> <p>This southern 'country' are too busy to entertain silly provocation.. #southerncountry</p>

Table 6. Categories and examples of hope motives

Category	
<p>Hope</p> <p>Definition: Team-directed pronouncements centered on desirable achievement and outcomes demonstrating one or a combination of ambition, expectation and situational anticipation (Stavros et. al, 2014)</p>	
Sub-category	Examples
Ambition	<p>This year will be ours!</p> <p>At least please save the team from relegation! I am sure we will. Let Pulau Pinang and Pahang go to relegation. Let's forget this year and focus on next year.</p> <p>We already lifted 2 cups..lets make it 3. Come on JDT, we can!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</p> <p>If you guys can beat Kedah, we can make it to the top..lets humiliate them and be champion for the first time..we will write history in Malaysian football</p> <p>We will be a champion, 3<sup>rd</sup> in a row!</p>
Expectation	<p>With God willing, Larkin will be full house tomorrow with our 12<sup>th</sup> player.</p> <p>I think issey will be fit enough to play tonight. If he is, we can control the center and give them more pressure.</p> <p>Tganu players who will likely to stay:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Joseph</li> <li>2 Issey</li> <li>3 Bikana</li> <li>4 Hafizal</li> <li>5 Dhiyaulrahman</li> <li>6 Matyo</li> <li>7 ashaari</li> <li>8 sabi</li> <li>9 Ismail Faruqi</li> <li>10 Shahrin Shapien</li> <li>11 amirul syahmi</li> </ol> <p>I think he will be fired after this season...the management will</p>

	<p>appoint foreign coach probably who has experienced in Asian football scenes...</p> <p>JDT reached the 2nd round of the ACL. This is our last touch to qualify for ACL next year. JDT will surely get into ACL 2017 and Kedah will be 2<sup>nd</sup> and FUFC will be 3<sup>rd</sup> in the table league, Kedah FA will go to AFC Cup 2017. Nice isn't it???</p>
Anticipation	<p>0-0 the next round? Come on Southern Tigers! Johor Come on!</p> <p>Final score would be 1 - 1 or 2- 1 or 3- 1. JDT always give 1 goal to its rival..haha..</p> <p>Do not worry jdt.. we will get 4-1 in semi-final</p> <p>3-0 or 2-0. We will get clean sheet. Go Felda go!!!</p> <p>JDT 3 VS SOUTH CHINA 1 [DIAZ 2, SAFEE 1]</p>

Table 7. Categories and examples of esteem motives

Category	
<p>Esteem</p> <p>Definition: Comments directed toward the team and/or fellow fans that share positive or negative personal fandoms experiences, or proclaim expertise and knowledge in team related matters (Stavros et. al, 2014)</p>	
Venting	<p>The referee is crazy!! But Safiq is crazier! Why did he do the back pass to the goal post??!! Didn't he realize aidil and Izam are injured? You guys better look for an early goal, we can secure the results and no more desperation in last minute!</p> <p>Referees are biased! WTF??!!!! Damn it!!!!</p> <p>You see, if the refs are from middle east, their decisions are worst. What, are they BLIND?!!! They love giving cards to our players!!!!</p> <p>Pity you guys, seems like you guys just learned how to play football yesterday..the cup is a joke cup, it is for kids!</p> <p>What kind of rubbish mentality is this?!! Same goes to the newspaper..they kind of printing some rubbish news. You guys should check it in metro online</p>

	<p>I can't believe we are in relegation. I hope we will have a lucky season next year..please ask for another 40 million from the minister..buy more good players! And let the shareholders eat shit!</p> <p>What a stupid game! stupid tacticals! No 31 &amp; 3 play like shit!</p>
Expertise	<p>Article 13.3 AFC Disciplinary Code 2016...If a player receives a warning (yellow card) in 2 separate matches of the same AFC competition, he is automatically suspended for the next match....well to me it is fated. Every cloud has a silver lining. Not our luck.</p> <p>We need 4 AFC license to get automatic slot to the AFC league....it is not as simple as winning the AFC cup alone...we must play in play-off match....remember many great clubs in middle east are also in the play-offs....</p> <p>FELDA United FC boasted that they were always the better team, they claim that they were difficult to be beaten and win many matches during regular season, but the facts show that they are 2nd Best to JDT in MSL, lost to PKNS FC in the 3rd Round of FA Cup and lost to T-Team in Quarter Final of Malaysia CUP. The fact is that; they did not win any Championship title for the year 2016. Next year will be even more difficult for them. It's not how you start; it's how you finish.</p> <p>MAIN CRITERIA TO QUALIFY JDT TO ACL:</p> <p>1. Organization League 13 league organization criteria that must be followed. Among them are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum number of teams: 10</li> <li>• The number of league games for each team in the league: 27</li> <li>• Length of time for the entire league and cup: minimum 8 months</li> <li>• Length of time for the league's highest division: minimum 8 months</li> <li>• The number of international referees registered with MA: 7</li> </ul>
Sharing	<p>3 knock out match in larkin = 52,672 spectators VS 15 knock out matches in other venue = 31,770 spectators..CONGRATS JDT!</p> <p>AFC CUP 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yellow cards (JDT)</li> </ul> <p>QF1 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Azamuddin</li> <li>- Aidil</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diaz</li> <li>- Kunanlan</li> <li>- Lucero</li> </ul> <p>QF2 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safiq</li> <li>- Azrif</li> <li>- Amri</li> </ul> <p>SF1 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Antonio</li> <li>- Diaz</li> <li>- Lucero</li> <li>- Amri</li> </ul> <p><b>**This means in the second leg, we will play without Diaz, Lucero and Amri.</b></p> <p>#jost #setiabersamamujohor</p> <p>Live update: Felda Utd 0 Terengganu 1 Selangor 2 Kelantan 1 T-Team 0 Kedah 2</p>
Criticism	<p>They are just too slow. Look at their tired faces..they are not energetic and they did not run that fast..if they keep the same bad performance.. please get rid of them. They better play for the reserve team in state's league.</p> <p>I have been following Jon since early season..he failed in passings, stop ball, ball control etc. why is he still in the first eleven?</p> <p>I think we need major revamp with the team and management. There might be some internal issues. The management seem lost this season. I personally think it has something to do with money and mismanagement.</p> <p>Agreed, we came all the way from the city to this 'STADIUM IN A JUNGLE'. I don't think a stadium in this area is a good idea. You guys made it difficult for the fans. Most of them are from the city. Another thing, the management does not appreciate us, the loyal fans. Come on, we never missed coming to the stadium..do appreciate the loyal fans.</p>

	<p>Forkey Doe keep losing the ball..he used to be so good but he is just somebody else now...I hardly see him sprint as fast as Thiago did. i think he failed us..he is failed as a striker for FU..please replace him with better striker next year.</p> <p>Generally, we failed this season because we did not win any cup. Are the investments worth it? I mean.. come on guys, this club uses people's money. It came from federal government's linked company. What does Malaysians get from this investment? I just think we should stop this if it does not bring any good return.</p> <p>This is how I see the game:</p> <p>Mistake 1: Goalkeeper catch the ball outside the penalty box, but no foul is given?? the ref allows match to continue despite the protests.</p> <p>Mistake 2: Their striker touch the ball inside the penalty area before he shoot the ball into the post and lead us, the referee should not count that as a goal. Players did protest but were ignored by the referee.</p> <p>Mistake 3: Last minute goal by Dilshod was canceled by the referee for doing a foul on the keeper. This decision once again led the players to make a protest against the decision. This does not include decisions made by the linesman. Hopefully this does not recur in the future.</p>
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Table 8. Categories and examples of camaraderie motives

Category	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Camaraderie</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Definition: Community directed comments that reflect a desire for identification and interaction within the community, including knowledge seeking and preserving the group from negative influences (Stavros et. al, 2014)</p>	
Socialization	<p>Izudin Ghani, I was blocked by the admin for promoting insurance package. It has been a year, now they have unblocked me.</p> <p>Come on, don't be too lazy to read. ..read the page one by one, then you will know the details of the game..hahahah...</p> <p>Bro when are we going for some coffee? It has been a while. I am</p>

	<p>going to the stadium tonight. See you guys around after the game!</p> <p>Don't get too stress, chill bros..lemme give you guys flying kisses...mmuaahhh..haha..</p>
Belonging	<p>OUR CLUB, OUR PRIDE! IF IT IS NOT US, WHO ELSE WILL? #FANSJDT #JDTSOUTHERNTIGER</p> <p>Bring Johor and Malaysian flags with you guys. We represent the state and the country, eventhough everyone hate FAM..hahaha..</p> <p>This is Larkin, the home of southern tigers.....lets wear the same blue shirt, make some noise and do the Mexican wave..hahahaha....</p>
Defense	<p>What's wrong with bad English? As long as people can understand him, that would be enough! Look at Japanese, they don't really care and just speak their mother tongue. And they are more developed from us. We should just speak in Malay language, the most important is our performance in pitch. #donotcomplain #justmy2cents #iam22yo</p> <p>Hey let's back them up...I had enough with this...no wonder we are not developing...if these guys are still around we would not be anywhere further...be positive guys!! let's talk something constructive!!</p> <p>Please do not bother them... We may be small but we will show them who we are. To those hypocrites, you are welcome to unlike and play your video games at home...</p>
Problem Solving	<p>Anyone travelling to bangalore for the away leg?</p> <p>Do they sell grand stand tickets online?</p> <p>Guys, there are live match on TV. Tune to TV3, 845pm. Another match is on TV9, Perak vs Selangor..</p> <p>Tv9, boss, don't waste your money...by the way why don't they have online streaming?</p>



### **4.3. Difference of Ownership Type**

The purpose of this study is to explore the different category of fans motivation between different clubs. RQ1 asked how fans motivation are differ between privately owned club, association club and company owned club.

#### **4.3.1 Private Ownership Club**

JDT is a private ownership club, owned by Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim, a Johor Royal Family member. JDT is also the only privately owned club in MSL. Building on the results of the content analysis, the highest number of fans motivation for JDT is encouragement. Love and praise are also common in expressing fans communication with the club. There is strong team identification from JDT fan which can be seen in their postings. Expressions of love, encouragement, praise and ardency were commonplace and highly consistent with extant notions of passion in the broader consumption literature (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003).

Encouragements from the fans are also seen towards the owner of the club. In fact, there are a lot of comments directed to the club owner, purposely to show the fans appreciation, love and praise. Compared with Terengganu FA which is an association and Felda United which is a company owned club, fans in JDT Facebook page show some interactions to

the club owner. Interestingly, the club owner as well uses the club's Facebook page to communicate with the fans. There are consistent postings from the club owner to engage with the fans.

Another important characteristic about JDT Facebook page in this study is the active engagement between the page administrator and the fans. In ten days sample, there are 104 postings made by the page administrator and that has impacted to fans comments into 16,551. The more postings are made by the page administrator, the more likely fans to interact on the Facebook's wall.

Compared to association club and company owned club, private ownership club tended to have more casual conversations with the fans. Posting on state's recent activities, players having newborn babies and club owner's activities are common in JDT Facebook page. These postings are interesting and attracted a lot of comments from the fans. JDT has 1,702,606 followers on their page, which is also the main reason the club has a high number of online interactions. During 10 days data collection, the numbers of followers for JDT keep increasing. According to Laverie and Arnett (2000), another aspect to consider while determining what creates an enduring sports fan is social identity. After a connection is established, one begins to identify with the team on a personal level, basing actions on how

they would like others to view them as much as acting in a manner in which they would like to portray themselves. In JDT Facebook page, there are significantly high numbers of postings made from the page administrator on the Johor state's unity agenda called 'Bangsa Johor' or Johor Nation. Hence, there are a strong connection between the state, the club and the fans in JDT's Facebook page.

It is interesting to found that JDT has significantly low number of comments motivated by tribalism. However, state affiliation motive were seen more common compared to tribalism. Researchers have shown, for instance, that family, peers, and community play very prominent roles in the development of fanship (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). Furthermore, identifications form for reasons of geography (e.g., the home town team), allegiances held by significant others (e.g., family members and friends), and school attendance (e.g., support one's alma mater).

#### **4.3.2 Association Club**

Terengganu FA is an association club. The page has 149,106 followers. In this study, a ten days sample has collected 35 postings from page administrator and 741 comments from the fans and the page administrator. The most significant sub-category of motivation is venting.

Venting in this study have shown less positive sentiments in fans

comments but rather expressing dissatisfaction towards the club by using strong and abusive words (e.g. Referees are biased! WTF??!!!! Damn it!!!!). As explained earlier, another new motive; criticism were created to differentiate how fans communicate with the club by using statements which contain the expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes. Criticisms comments in this study were also seen to avoid abusive words. This phenomenon of high number of venting comments is mainly caused by data collection during the season. Fans were found immediately express their feeling particularly during, and after the match. Furthermore, a lot of decisions made by clubs, coach or players are happening during the season. According to Stavros et. al (2014), fans exhibited venting behavior where they expressed a strong opinion and sought, and often received, validation by other fans. Although much of this venting still revealed positive sentiments about the team, there were numerous comments expressing dissatisfaction. These posts typically related to disappointment with past performance, frustration with players not following coaches' instructions or not succeeding where there was the perceived opportunity to do so.

In the case of Terengganu FA, venting is common in every postings made by the page administrator. Regardless of the posting topic, venting

comments are commonly seen to express fans dissatisfaction and frustration towards the club. Performance is the main subjects of venting comments which will be explain further in the next sub topic.

One of the defining elements of sports fanship is that the fan identifies strongly with their favorite team and responds to the performance of the team as if team success were a personal success and team failure a personal failure (Hirt, Zillmann, Kennedy, & Erickson, 1992). A new sub-category, criticism emerged in this study because criticism is significantly seen in many comments from the fans. Terengganu FA fans found to express high number of comments which criticized many aspects of the club. However, comments are found more constructive and directed to specific party (e.g. I think we need major revamp with the team and management. There might be some internal issues. The management seem lost this season. I personally think it has something to do with money and mismanagement).

In addition, the pattern of interaction between page administrator and fans can be seen in several postings. Terengganu FA's Facebook page administrator replied several comments from the fans, particularly in question form. The page administrator responded with answers and information, which generated more interaction between club and fans.

#### **4.3.3 Company Owned Club**

Felda United is a club owned by Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA). Fans esteem through venting comments is significant in this study. At the same time, encouragement comments are as well, commonly seen in Felda United Facebook page. During the study, Felda United was in the second position in the MSL league table. Compared to Terengganu FA which was in the bottom of the league, Felda United has both high number of venting and encouragement motives at the same time. This unique characteristic is mainly due to the fact that they performed well in the league, but on the other hand, the fans have a lot of issues and dissatisfaction with the club's management. For example, a comment from a fan who was dissatisfied with club's decision to move its home stadium to sub-urban areas, (e.g. Agreed, we came all the way from the city to this 'STADIUM IN A JUNGLE'. I don't think a stadium in this area is a good idea. You guys made it difficult for the fans).

It is also important to note that Felda United's page administrator was responsive to the fans comments. Conversation among fans and page administrator can be seen in regards to problem solving and information sharing. This finding can also relate to Terengganu FA, which also has page administrator responsive to fans comments. In Felda United page, with the

less number of postings and comments, page administrator were more alert with fans comments and seen interacted with the fans.

While JDT and Terengganu FA have large fan base, Felda United on the other hand has less fan base. Felda United is not affiliated to any region or area but to a company. To the contrary, both JDT and Terengganu are a representative of a state in Malaysia. Hence, sub category like state affiliation is not existed in any comment from the fans. A sense of tribalism is also hardly seen except in one comment in Felda United Facebook page.

State affiliation and tribalism are two important motivations shown by the fans of JDT and Terengganu FA. Comments made by fans such as (e.g. We are the southerners!!! JDT and JDT II for Johoreans!) are prevalent. In JDT's Facebook page, state affiliation is more prevalent than tribalism as explained earlier. Fans showed a strong affiliation to the state rather than to the team. Compared to Terengganu FA, state affiliation and tribalism are almost the same in terms of numbers. JDT and Terengganu FA both showed some motives on state affiliation and tribalism in comparison with Felda United.

Furthermore, comparison between Felda United and the other two clubs is motivations of love and ambition are not existed in any fans comments. Expressions of passion were often brief and stimulated limited

(if any) interaction or elaboration (Stavros et. al, 2014). However, Felda United fans did not express any brief comments related to their love to the club. This is related to ownership type of the club; owned by a company, and resulted in weak sense of belonging to the club from the fans. Thus, findings suggest that the motivation of love to the club is not significant compared to JDT and Terengganu FA fans. Though researchers have concurred that the sport fan role is not simplistic and often involves a deep psychological and emotional attachment to a team or teams (Funk & James, 2001; Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001), Felda United has a unique fans motivation which is related to their fan base; both online and offline.

#### **4.4. Difference of Position in League**

The purpose of this study is to explore the different category of fans motivation between different clubs. RQ2 asked how fans motivations are differ between club on top and bottom of the league table. Table 9. shows the summary of motivations for each club.

##### **4.4.1 Club on Top of League Table**

From a spectator's point of view, three factors may be regarded as important in determining the significance of fans communication in social media, specifically for team on top and bottom of league table. The first



factor is the question of whether the club is in contention for the league championship or is in danger of relegation. The second factor concerns the number of games remaining until championship or relegation. The third factor is the results of the match, whether the clubs win, lose or draw. These three factors play an important role in drawing fans communication pattern in social media. This study considers club's position on the league, including these three factors.

The stronger the contender, the greater is uncertainty of outcome and the greater the interest aroused by the fight (Jennet, 1984). As sports fans are attracted to the winning teams, JDT received a lot of attention in social media. JDT is a former AFC Cup champion and MSL champion two years in a row. As a potential league champion, JDT page was not only visited by fans from Malaysia, but also fans around Asia. A lot of fans from Indonesia, India, Philipines, Bangladesh, India, Singapore and Brunei were seen supporting the club on its Facebook page.

JDT fans exhibited strong passion towards the club. Love, tribalism, encouragement, praise and state affiliation. Encouragement is significant due to the fact that JDT has more number of matches. JDT has more matches compared to Terengganu FA, club on the bottom of MSL League. JDT played in Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup and went into the

finals in 2015. In 2016, JDT plays in the same cup with the champion ticket. Hence, the fans have more opportunity to show their support to the club via social media.

Fans motivation on ambition is commonly seen as the league was coming to the end of season. There are more fans motivated by ambition, expectation and anticipation (e.g. We already lifted 2 cups..lets make it 3. Come on JDT, we can!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!). JDT has 3 matches left in MSL and 2 match left in AFC Cup during the data collection. This study found that, more comments are written in JDT Facebook page prior of any match. Compared to post match, less comments are made by the fans. Prior to match, fans are motivated to post encouragement, love, ambition, expectation and anticipation comments. On comparison, fans made comments motivated by praise, venting and defense after the matches finished. This study also relied heavily on the data taken during the season while the previous literature was done during off-season. Hence, there are also comments made during the match. Many fans wrote comments motivated by sharing, expertise and socialization during the match. The fact that JDT page administrator post live update on their Facebook page has also attracted more comments from the fans to share live results, what is happening in the venue, comment the tactical and line ups and socialize

among themselves through the Facebook wall.

This study also found that JDT fans are actively engaging in social interactions with other fans through the use of social media. These interactions occur through participation in fan debates, by commenting or replying to others' posts, by sharing knowledge, and through shared experiences. This study found that social media is affording fans new opportunities to publicly legitimize their fandom. Specifically, fans are using social media to publicly display team support and sport-related knowledge.

Table 9. Summary of motivations for each club

Club Ownership Type	Position in League	Significant Motivations	Less Significant Motivations
Privately Owned (JDT)	Top	Encouragement Love Praise	Criticism Expertise Tribalism
Association (Terengganu FA)	Bottom	Venting Criticism Encouragement	Praise Expertise Problem solving
Company Owned (Felda United)	-	Venting Encouragement Anticipation	Love State affiliation Tribalism

#### 4.4.2 Club on Bottom of League Table

Venting and criticism are prevalent in Terengganu FA fans comments. During data collection, Terengganu FA is the club on the bottom of MSL league table. Relegation is among issues raised by the fans and

most comments are directed towards the management of the club. Compared to JDT, Terengganu FA has been struggling to save the club from relegation. With more lost than win, and the fact that the clubs performed well in the previous season, most of the fans were dissatisfied with the club.

Through social media, fans' voices can be heard, and they can be heard immediately. Before the introduction of social media, researchers had stated that sport communities are generally centered around the commemoration of past sport events (Lechner, 2007; Nash, 2000) rather than on live exchanges (Smith, 1999). In the case of Terengganu FA, fans did mention the club management in their comments.

“I think we need major revamp with the team and management. There might be some internal issues. The management seem lost this season. I personally think it has something to do with money and mismanagement.”

The fans were found tend to direct the message to the club's management. Venting and criticism comments directed to players and coach are less prevalent. However, encouragements were seen directed to players. These types of comments were commonly seen before matches. For example, “We will always support you no matter what... We know we are

small but we have sacrificed a lot just to be in the stadium and cheer you guys up. ...Love T'ganu!!! XOXOXOXO”.

Ambition motivated comments for Terengganu FA were found mostly related not to winning the league but rather to save the club from relegation. For example, “GOOD LUCK TERENGGANU FA. IT'S DO OR DIE. WE STAND BEHIND YOU GUYS!!” The ambition motivated comments were also a way of support shown by the fans to the club. Many fans tried to stay positive and post supportive comments despite a lot of fans venting and anticipate relegation to the club. Comments contain both encouragement and venting motive in Terengganu FA Facebook page was also created another important motive in this study, which is defense. The comments between fans that showed strong encouragement and fans that showed venting behavior was seen to create conversations contain defense motive.

This study also found that despite the high number of venting and criticism, comments motivated by love to the club are still common. A lot of fans found expressed their love to the club but frustrated at the same time. For example, “It is hard to say goodbye to MSL, we did so bad, but this is the club I grow up with, this is my pride and joy, whatever happens, I still love Terengganu”. The study here shows that the fans are emotionally

attached to their favourite clubs and the success or failure of these teams is considered by the fans as their own success or failures. The comments in the social media like how to improve the performance of teams are indications of showing authority on the favourite clubs by the sports users due to the high degree of fanship and self esteem. This is in spite of the fact that the sports fans have very little control over their favourite teams.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study is to explore the difference of fans motivation to interact with sports club which are different in ownership type and league position.

The sports managers have identified its importance in getting support from the fans and strengthening their teams. Given this, identification of the motives for the sports fans to interact through the social media is very important in developing strategies for improving the interaction between sports club and the fans.

This study tries to fill this gap based on the identification of the motives for football fans interaction through social media taking into account the club ownership type and club position in the league.

In the first chapter, the relevance of the study and the objectives of the study are discussed in detail. The second chapter discusses the existing studies related to the objectives of the study. It shows that though there are many studies examining the motivation of sports consumption by fans, studies on the interaction of the sports fans through social media are limited.

In the third chapter, the research methodology for the present study is clearly discussed. The discussion shows that positivism with qualitative

approach is used for the study using the research tool; netnography, content analysis and inductive category development approach.

The fourth chapter discusses the findings of the study. It shows that the football fans have different motivations to interact on social media for the purposes of passion, hope, esteem and camaraderie. In this study, two new sub-category emerged; state affiliation and criticism.

Through the sharing of knowledge and experiences, members are able to enhance their self-esteem as well as develop feelings of group belonging (Hogg & Abrams, 2003; Tajfel, 1976). Privately owned club fans have high motive of encouragement, love, and praise. This study also illustrates multiple fans in privately owned club have a sense of affiliation to the state and it is higher than a sense of tribalism with the club. Motives like venting, defense and ambition are significant for club on top of the league position. The club on top also has received low number of criticism comments. Association club fans in opposite have high number of venting and criticism motive. However, this phenomenon is also rely on the club position in the league for this study. The club located on the bottom of the league showed to have more emotional and venting behavior from the fans. For some fans, particularly in association club, the ability to share their knowledge about their favorite team within the official club's Facebook



page is seen as a sense of sharing. Company owned club on the other hand showed very low sense of tribalism and criticism. Love and state affiliation motives are not seen in company owned club.

The data drawn from the Facebook page also noted that number of followers for each category of club is significantly different. Privately owned club has the highest followers in social media, followed by association club and company owned club. In addition, club on top of league has significantly high number of followers compared to club on bottom of league.

Sport managers can assess these networks and identify potential opinion leaders (for example those with numerous active ‘friends’ or ‘followers’) to be targeted for relationship building and to stimulate interaction. Fan expressions of hope allow an organization to monitor and potentially manage expectations. This data can assist sport managers in establishing communication initiatives or programs that resonate with fans. Many sports organizations have understood the importance of adopting relationship-marketing strategies in order to nurture long-term relationships with customers (Williams and Chinn, 2010; Stavros, Pope, and Winzar, 2008).

Furthermore, Facebook provide a platform where sports fans can gather experience greater sense of fandom to the club they belong to. Being part of a social tribe or group of fans offers social benefits because it allows the participants to feel a sense of community, solidarity, prestige, and self-esteem (Dionisio, Leal, and Moutinho, 2008). Sports organization can capitalize this platform to enhance their corporate identity and good governance practice.

Although social media is still young, it has already proven its worth in this study. By highlighting the varying motives fans are using social media, and creating distinct modes of social media usage, this study has provided insight into the ways sports teams, players, and sport media can leverage social media in an effort to enhance communication and relationship marketing in sports.

### **5.1 Limitations of the Research**

There are several limitations of this study needed to be addressed. First, this study used content analysis and netnographic approach. It also applied inductive category development approach. In conducting the methodology approach, particularly inductive category development approach, accuracy in grouping and coding the new sub-category of fans motives are very much important. In addition, these two methodologies are

qualitative and rely very much on researcher's observation and discipline. Thus, the generalizability of the research findings might have been compromised.

Second, the lack of back translation process might result in information loss even though it was reviewed by three bilingual graduate students. Third, in the current study, the direct use of the two additional motives found; states affiliation and criticism would potentially result in the sacrifice of content validity.

In this study, the findings are based on the case study of football fans, which can have generalization problems while applied to other sports or other teams. Hence, the same study can be extended to examine the psychological motives for the other sports fans to interact through social media. In addition to these, there can be differences in the results based on the demographic or cultural features of the respondents, which are not clearly captured in this study. Therefore, a detailed study, which accounts for the differences in this regard among the respondents for different sports can provide more detailed insights regarding the psychological motives for the fans to interact through the social media.

Additionally, the sample used in this study also consisted of a single aspect of a much larger professional sport industry. This delimitation was

necessary for the manageability of data gathering and analysis. However, future research should extend this model to other aspects of sport to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Finally, the sample data can be changing from time to time. This is due to the fact that Facebook has included other features (e.g., dislike and delete comment button) that could change the number of like and comments.

## **5.2 Recommendations for Future Research**

The study can be extended through time using surveys of the football fans along with the online survey. The relationship of club ownership structure with fans motivation can be a continuation of this study. The comparison of the motives for different fans and under different cultural background also can be a field for fruitful research in the future. All these will have significant managerial implications.

Moreover, the focus on Facebook is limited because the features were only assessed in one social network medium. Social networks are just one component of the social media picture that organizations are utilizing to build stakeholder relationships. As such, future research should evaluate other popular network sites (e.g., Google+, LinkedIn), microblogs (e.g., Twitter), shared content (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), and social location

platforms (e.g., Foursquare) to identify additional attributes that contribute to fans communication with sport organizations.

Furthermore, given that this study focused specifically on football fans and their social media usage in regards to their football fandom, future studies should explore social media use and fandom within the other sport leagues as well as any major international sporting events like Olympic Games. Such studies would allow further understanding if the motives identified in this dissertation apply to sport fandom in general, or if the motives are only applicable to football fans. A methodical program of research should continue to assess social media usage and the role it plays in sports communication.

In particular, the continuation of examine social media usage is important to answer further questions on how social media can be leveraged to develop and foster relationship between sports organization and their stakeholders. This is due to the fact that organizations and individuals from a variety of fields are increasingly utilizing social media as part of their marketing strategy.

Additionally, further quantitative work needs to be undertaken to increase generalizability of this research.

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## 국 문 초 록

# 소셜 미디어 및 팬: 클럽 소유 유형 및 리그 위치가 팬을 어떻게 차별화하는지 전문 스포츠 클럽과 상호 작용하려는 동기

Kamarul Ikram Abdul Halim

글로벌스포츠매니지먼트 전공

체육교육과

서울대학교 대학원

이 연구는 스포츠 팬이 소셜 미디어를 사용하여 스포츠 조직과 상호 작용하는 방법을 조사하는 것에 목적이 있다. 프로 스포츠 클럽은 소셜 미디어가 팬과의 강한 유대 관계를 맺는 데 도움이 될 수 있는 잠재력을 보다 잘 이해할 수 있고, 팬들의 커뮤니티가 있는 중요한 단체다. 연구 질문은 소셜 미디어에서 전문 스포츠 클럽과 팬의 통신을 평가하는 프레임 워크가 부족하다는 스포츠 커뮤니케이션 문학의 차이를 확인하고자 한다. 선행연구의 주요

동기를 바탕으로 소유 형태 및 리그 순위가 다른 3 개의 말레이시아 슈퍼 리그 (MSL) 클럽 공식 페이스 북 페이지에서 넷 로그 방법론을 사용하여 콘텐츠 분석을 수행했다. 3 개의 축구 클럽 팬들의 온라인 논평은 MSL 시즌 중 10 일 동안 조사했다. 귀납적 카테고리 개발 접근법은 팬들의 추가적인 동기를 추출하는데 사용되었다. 결과는 다른 클럽 소유 유형 및 리그 위치에서 팬은 스포츠 클럽과 상호 작용하는 다른 주요 동기가다는 것을 보여 주었다. 결과는 연구 질문에 비추어 논의되었으며 소셜 미디어를 통해 소통하는 팬들의 영역에서 더 많은 연구를 수행 할 것을 권고 한다.

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**주요어:** 팬 동기 부여, 상호 작용, 소셜 미디어

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